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Documents 735

Needless to say we have held knowledge of this telegram to minimum essential people and assume you will take similar precautions to prevent premature leaks.

[Document 127]

Reprinted from New York Times

Lodge's Reply to Washington

*Cablegram from Ambassador Lodge to Secretary of State Dean Rusk and Assistant Secretary of State Roger Hilsman. Aug. 25, 1963.*

Believe that chances of Diem's meeting our demands are virtually nil. At same time, by making them we give Nhu chance to forestall or block action by military. Risk, we believe, is not worth taking, with Nhu in control combat forces Saigon.

Therefore, propose we go straight to Generals with our demands, without informing Diem. Would tell them we prepared have Diem without Nhus but it is in effect up to them whether to keep him. Would also insist generals take steps to release Buddhist leaders and carry out June 16 agreement.

Request immediate modification instructions. However, do not propose move until we are satisfied with E and E plans. Harkins concurs. I present credentials President Diem tomorrow 11 A.M.

[Document 128]

Reprinted from New York Times

C.I.A. Aide's Cable to Chief on Contact with Saigon Generals

*Cablegram from John Richardson, the Central Intelligence Agency's Saigon station chief, to John A. McCone, Director of Central Intelligence, Aug. 26, 1963.*

During meeting with Harkins, Truehart, Mecklin and COS on morning 26 Aug Lodge made decision that American official hand should not show. Consequently, Harkins will take no initiative with VNese generals. (Conein to convey points below to Gen. Khiem; Spera to Khanh; if Khiem agrees on Conein talking to Don, he will).

(A) Solicitation of further elaboration of action aspects of present thinking and planning. What should be done?

(B) We in agreement Nhus must go.

(C) Question of retaining Diem or not up to them.

(D) Bonzes and other arrestees must be released immediately and five-point agreement of 16 June fully carried out.

(E) We will provide direct support during any interim period of breakdown central gov mechanism.

(F) We cannot be of any help during initial action of assuming power of state. Entirely their own action, win or lose. Don't expect be bailed out.

(G) If Nhus do not go and if Buddhists situation is not redressed as indicated, we would find it impossible continue military and economic support.